



Receptive Language

Bolton Council

Educational Psychology Service & Speech and Language Therapy Service

This leaflet has been designed to support parents and educators on strategies to develop receptive language at home.



Receptive Language Difficulties

Receptive language is another word for understanding. Receptive language difficulties are when a child struggles to understand the meaning of spoken words and sentences.

To support receptive language at home you can:



Check they're listening

Sit opposite your child, make sure you are face-to-face, and engage in eye contact before giving an instruction.



Use total communication

Use gestures, body language, facial expressions and pictures alongside words to help your child understand what you are saying.



Slow down

Reduce your rate of speech to allow time for the child to process what is being said.



Break it up

Break up longer instructions into smaller steps and give these one at a time.



Simplify

Simplify the words you use. Emphasise key words when giving instructions by changing your intonation – e.g. 'a put your **books** on the **shelf**'.



Encourage asking for help

Encourage the child/young person to let you know when they do not understand what has been said to them.



Use choices

If a child/young person is struggling to understand and answer an open question (e.g. 'What would you like for lunch?') try giving them a forced alternative (e.g. 'would you like a sandwich or a jacket potato?')



Check understanding

Check a child/young person's understanding if using non-literal language/idioms/sarcasm – e.g. 'I'm pulling your leg'. You may need to explain the literal meaning if they do not understand.